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## MARATHA ADMINISTRATION IN PRANT BIJAPUR (1760 A.D. - 1848 A.D.)



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### ABSTRACT:

**E**stablishment of Maratha rule over Bijapur, is a very important aspect of Maratha History in Medieval India. In 1760 A.D. with the treaty of Udgir with Nizam, Maratha became ruler of Bijapur. From 1760 A.D. to 1818 A.D. Peshwa enjoyed full political regime over Bijapur. But due to internal disputes between Peshwa and Chatrapati, Englishmen entered in political scenario of India. Finally, in 1818, by defeating Peshwa in war of Aashti, Englishmen became ruler of Satara Raj (Bijapur was a Prant of Satara Raj).

In spite of all these political ups and downs, one feature remain as it was and this feature was Maratha administration system which remain as it was in the times of Shivaji with slight changes. Maratha administration was such effective and applicable, that Englishmen accepted same for the administration of Bijapur.

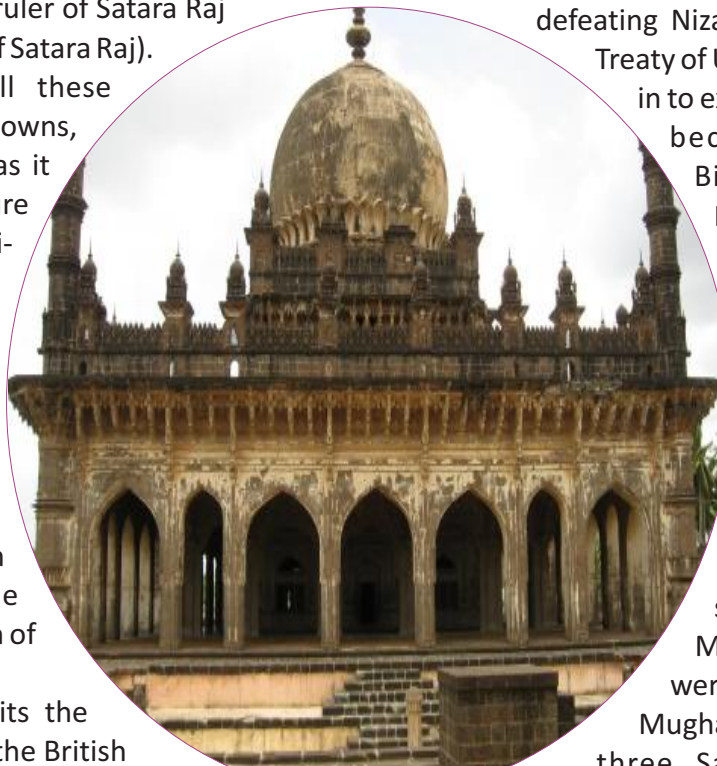
Present paper exhibits the changing attitude of the British towards the people of India. The period from 1818 A.D. to 1848 A.D. was a period of transition. The period was witnessing a gradual shift from Medieval to Modern ideas. The unique feature of Bijapur History in this

time period (1760 A.D.-1848 A.D.) was introduction of new ideas in administration without altering much the Maratha administrative framework.

**KEY WORDS:** *political ups and downs, Maratha administration system, effective and applicable.*

### INTRODUCTION:

The Marathas dominated the political scene of Medieval Indian History for two centuries. By defeating Nizam in battle of Udgir, Treaty of Udgir (1760 A.D.) came in to existence and Marathas became the ruler of Bijapur with Ambad, Phulambari, Nanded, Aseri and Daulatabad fort and Burhanpur in South India.<sup>1</sup> But there was a great difference in the positions of the Nizam and the Marathas. The Nizam was the servant of the Mughals but Marathas were not the vassals of the Mughals. By granting the three Sanads, the Mughal recognized the sovereignty of the Marathas in their own land and also their right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the six Mughal Subhas of the Deccan. Later Emperors



Rafiudaraj (1719) and Muhammad Shah issued the farmans confirming the claims of obtaining Chauth and Sardeshmukhi by Marathas from Muhammadan territory in Deccan. In special reference to Subah of Bijapur the Marathas exacted Rs. 78508560, Anna 12 and Paise 04.<sup>2</sup> Further Raja Shahu received the Swaraj territory in Bijapur Carnatic in the north of Tungabhadra river, which included Koppal, Gadag and Haliyal.<sup>3</sup>

Under title "Maratha Administration in Prant Bijapur (1760 - 1848 A.D.)" the research articles is written in respect of the Prant Administration under the Peshwas (1760-1818 A.D.) and the Rajas of Satara (1818-1848 A.D.). According to Prof. K.N. Chitnis, "The Maratha administration in the Southern Maratha Country (including Bijapur) derived administrative elements from four sources viz. the Vijayanagar, the Adil Shahis, the Mughals and the Marathas." So in special reference to Bijapur Subah administration, was an admixture of the four erstwhile powers of the Deccan.<sup>4</sup>

In Maratha State, feudalism became imminent feature of administration. Maratha leaders, specially in post Shivaji period, accepted the Maratha Military Chiefs as vassals and gave them free hand in their administration. With the increase of the power of the Peshwa, the center of Maratha politics was shifted from Satara to Pune.

The territory under the Marathas in the 18th century was divided into 12 Subhas, which were further divided into Parganas also known as Mamlats or Taluqs. These were (1) Khandesh - 30 Parganas including Baglan, (2) Nemand - Handa : 5 Parganas, (3) Pune - Nagar : 16 Parganas, (4) Konkan : 15 Parganas, (5) Ganga-thadi including Nasik region - 25 Parganas, (6) Gujrat Prant - 20 Parganas, (7) Karnataka, (8) Satara with Wai and Karad, (9 & 10) The Custom Subhas : Pune, Junnar and Kalyan-Bhivandi, (11 & 12) Aarmar or Naval Subhas : Vijayadurg and Vasai.

These Prants were administered through officials like Kamvirdars, Subhedars, Saramjamdar, Mamlatdars, etc. The officers of village communities like Deshmukh, Deshpande, Patil and Kulkarni continued to perform their traditional function of collection of land revenue and maintenance of law and order in their areas. Besides these Prants, Parganas and village officials, there was the Secretariat at Pune, which controlled and supervised the activities of all officers. Peshwa Madhavrao I introduced the 'Kamaal' settlement by 1769 A.D. According to old records the total revenue of the Maratha State was approximately Rupees 7½ Crores.<sup>5</sup>

After the death of Chatrapati Shahu, Peshwas assumed supreme judicial powers. A post of chief justice was created in Pune Court to decide cases including those of the Peshwas. Rama Shastri Prabhune was a reputed justice who did not hesitate to pronounce capital punishment on Raghunathrao for the alleged murder of his nephew Narayanrao Peshwa in 1773 A.D.

The judicial administration in provinces was conducted by officers like Sarsubhedar, Subhedar, Kamvisdar, Mamlatdar etc. The old institution of Panchayat continued to play an important roles in deciding civil disputes. A special officer titled "kotwal" was also appointed for the protection and maintenance of Law and order in administrative area.

During 18th century Maratha adopted the policy of expansion. So state's military status mattered more. Infantry, cavalry and Navy continued to be the three main divisions of military. Two main divisions of cavalry were paga of the Bargirs, who were the paid servants and pathak of the shiledars who maintained their own horses and weapons and were paid by the state whenever their services were requisitioned. The salaries of soldiers were too low and even those were not paid regularly.

### **1818 A.D. - 1848 A.D. :**

The acquisition of the territories of the Peshwas by the British in 1818 A.D. put on end to the

Maratha power and the creation of Satara Raj on its ruins. Col. Thomas Munro, who held the charge of territories in the southern Maratha country under the treaty of Poona, 1817, instructed Elphinston to take care of disbanded Maratha forces by erecting some local government which would give employment to the military classes of the people.<sup>6</sup>

Elphinston decided to set up an independent kingdom with Chatrapati Pratapsingh as its head. But Elphinston was not ready to make any administrative experiment in newly created Satara Raj he wanted to reorganize administration, without disturbing much the existing system of Marathas.

Under such difficult situation Elphinston appointed Captain James Grant, as army officer, the first political agent at Satara. Reorganization of administration in Satara (Bijapur included) was known as 'Grant Sahebcha Dastur', defining the boundaries of new state was an important question. A very small portion of the territory between river Neera and Warna assigned to Raja Pratapsingh. The Satara state contained the following three parts: 1) Original Maratha Swaraj 2) Jagirdars 3) Bijapur.

With special reference to Bijapur it was decided in the treaty that there will be some additional territory made over to the Raja from the province of Bijapur. But of which the revenue shall not be up than one lakh of rupees.<sup>7</sup>

The following parganas, which were part of the province Bijapur, were handed over to Pratapsingh in 1821 A.D. They were Haveli Bijapur, Molwad, Kolhar, Balotee, Sindnath, Chimalge, Horti, Halsingi, Mandapur and Gote, yielding Rs. 1,22,068, Anna 2, Paise 43 amount of revenue.

James Grant followed the instruction of Elphinston while dividing the country into 'Pethas'. Elphinston followed Munro's advice to divide their collectorates into taluqs or districts producing land revenue between ½ and 1 lakh.

It is true that in lack of administrative experience Grant had to reorganize administrative units of Satara state thrice between 1818-1821 A.D.

In May 1821, Bijapur was included in Raja's territory. Bijapur petha included the following parganas 1) Haveli Bijapur 2) Molwad 3) Kolhar 4) Balotee 5) Sindnath 6) Chimalge 7) Horti 8) Halsingi 9) Mandapur and 10) Gate.

Grant tried to bring discipline, regularity and coordination in administration. Grant as a mentor taught basics of administration to Raja and importance of incorruptibility.

At the central administration, there was Ashta-Pradhan Mandal to assist the king. The members or ministers of Ashta-Pradhan Mandal were titled as Diwan, Punt Amatya, Punt Sachiv, Punt Mantri, Senapati, Sumant, Nyayadhis, Panditrao and Pratinidhi.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1818 A.D. to 1822 A.D. the British officers like James Grant managed the affairs of Satara State. He laid down foundation of Prant administration. Over Prant administration there was a sar subhedar (governor). Dabhaji Joshi, the Sarsubhedar inspected the accounts of Bijapur and prepared a statement regarding actual collections, the areas and the Tagai or Tacavy (advance or loan to ryots) and submitted to Raja with own Remarks.

Mamlatdar was head in petha. His duties were collecting of revenues, manage police, send reports to huzur etc. He was assisted by Shirastedar or Phadnavis (account-keeper), Jabanis (clerk), Nyayadhis (judge), Shekdar (Revenue officer), Saraf (Gold-Smith) and Kotwal (Police officer).<sup>9</sup>

Mamladar in consultation with Patil use to collect revenue. The main sources of the State was land tax. The other sources of public revenue were Zakat, Forest, Mint and Court of Law.

In South Bijapur Rastiya's agent managed the country. In Bijapur Prant Peshwa Bajirao introduced farming of revenue. The system brought destruction to Prant. Mamlatdars and Patil's were assisted by Kulkarni and Chaugala.

The last administrative unit was village. Village's headman was titled as Patil or Patel, he was

assisted by Kulkarni. The age old panchayat system was existed. With the help of this discussion, we can conclude that Maratha Administration, which was followed by Englishmen, in Bijapur was very effective. Although the success story of Satara's Administrative system was a result of combine efforts of Elphinston, James Grant and Raja Pratapsingh and it was followed by many as success path for good administration.

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